

E 471

C 18



THE ADMINISTRATION

AND

The Confederate States.

The following letter is one of a correspondence between HON. JOHN A. CAMPBELL, late Judge of the United States Supreme Court, and HON. WM. H. SEWARD, all of which was laid before the Provisional Congress on Saturday by PRESIDENT DAVIS.

WASHINGTON CITY, *April* 13, 1861.

SIR:—On the 15th March, ult., I left with Jud Crawford, one of the Commissioners of the Confederate States, a note in writing to the effect followi

“I feel entire confidence that Fort Sumter will be evacuated in the next five days. And this measure is felt as imposing great responsibility on the Administration.

“I feel entire confidence that no measure of the existing status, prejudicially to the Confederate States, is at present contemplated.

I feel an entire confidence that an immediate demand for an answer to the communication of the Commissioners will be productive of evil and not of good. I do not believe that it ought at this time to be pressed."

The substance of this statement I communicated to you the same evening by letter. Five days elapsed, and I called with a telegram from Gen. Beauregard, to the effect that Sumter was not evacuated, but that Major Anderson was at work making repairs.

The next day, after conversing with you, I communicated to Judge Crawford in writing that the failure to evacuate Fort Sumter was not the result of bad faith, but was attributable to causes consistent with the intention to fulfil the engagement, and that as regarded Pickens, I should have notice of any design to alter the existing status there. Mr. Justice Nelson was present at these conversations, three in number, and I submitted to him each of my written communications to Judge Crawford, and informed Judge C. that they had his (Judge Nelson's) sanction. I gave you, on the 22d of March, a substantial copy of the statement I had made on the 15th.

The 30th of March arrived, and at that time a telegram came from Gov. Pickens inquiring concerning Lamon, whose visit to Charleston he supposed a connection with the proposed evacuation of Sumter.

It was that with you, and was to have an answer following Monday—1st April. On the 1st of April I received from you the statement in writing, (satisfied) the Government will not undertake to evacuate Fort Sumter without giving notice to

Governor P." The words "I am satisfied," were for me to use as expressive of confidence in the remainder of the declaration.

The proposition as originally prepared, was : "The President *may desire* to supply Sumter, but will not do so," &c., and your verbal explanation was, that you did not believe any such attempt would be made, and that there was no design to reinforce Sumter.

There was a departure here from the pledges of the previous month, but with the verbal explanation I did not consider it a matter then to complain of. I simply stated to you that I had that assurance previously.

On the 7th of April, I addressed you a letter on the subject of the alarm that the preparations by the Government had created, and asked you if the assurances I had given were well or ill-founded. In respect to Sumter, your reply was "Faith as to Sumter fully kept—wait and see." In the morning's paper I read : "An authorized messenger from President Lincoln informed Gov. Pickens and General Beauregard that provisions would be sent to Fort Sumter peaceably, or *otherwise, by force.*" This was the 8th of April, at Charleston, the day following your last assurance, and is the evidence of the full faith I was invited to wait *for* and *see*. In the same paper I read that intercepted dispatches disclosed the fact that Mr. Fox, who had been allowed to visit Major Anderson, on the pledge that his purpose was pacific, employed his opportunity to devise a plan for supplying the Fort by force, and that this plan had been adopted by the Washington Government, and was in process of execution. My recollection of the date of

Mr. Fox's visit carries it to a day in March. I learn he is a near connection of a member of the Cabinet. My connection with the Commissioners and yourself was superinduced by a conversation with Justice Nelson. He informed me of your strong dispositions in favor of peace, and that you were oppressed with a demand of the Commissioners of the Confederate States for a reply to their first letter, and that you desired to avoid it, if possible, at that time. I told him I might, perhaps, be of some service in arranging the difficulty. I came to your office entirely at his request, and without the knowledge of either of the Commissioners. Your depression was obvious to both Judge Nelson and myself. I was gratified at the character of the counsels you were desirous of pursuing, and much impressed with your observation that a civil war might be prevented by the success of my mediation. You read a letter of Mr. Weed, to show how irksome and responsible the withdrawal of troops from Sumter was. A portion of my communication to Judge Crawford on the 15th of March was founded upon these remarks, and the pledge to evacuate Fort Sumter is less forcible than the words you employed. Those words were: "Before this letter reaches you (a proposed letter by me to President Davis,) Sumter will have been evacuated."

The Commissioners who received those communications conclude they have been abused and overreached. The Montgomery Government hold the same opinion. The Commissioners have supposed that my communications were with you, and upon the hypothesis prepared to arraign you before the country in connection with the President. I placed

a peremptory prohibition upon this as being contrary to the terms of my communication with them. I pledged myself to them to communicate information upon what I considered as the best authority, and they were to confide in the ability of myself, aided by Judge Nelson, to determine upon the credibility of my informant.

I think no candid man who will read over what I have written, and consider for a moment what is going on at Sumter, but will agree that the equivocating conduct of the Administration, as measured and interpreted in connection with these promises, is the proximate cause of the great calamity.

I have a profound conviction that the telegrams of the 8th of April, of Gen. Beauregard, and of the 10th of April, of Gen. Walker, the Secretary of War, can be referred to nothing else than their belief that there has been systematic duplicity practiced on them through me. It is under an oppressive sense of the weight of the responsibility that I submit to you these things for your explanation.

Very respectfully,

(Signed,) JOHN A. CAMPBELL,

Associate Justice of the Supreme C. U. S.

HON. WM. H. SEWARD, *Sec'y of State.*

WASHINGTON CITY, April 20, 1861.

SIR:—I enclose you a letter, corresponding very nearly with one I addressed to you a week ago—13th April—to which I have not had any reply. The let-

ter is simply one of inquiry in reference to facts concerning which, I think, I am entitled to an explanation. I have not adopted any opinion in reference to them which may not be modified by explanation, nor have I affirmed in that letter, nor do I in this, any conclusion of my own unfavorable to your integrity in the whole transaction.

All that I have said, and mean to say, is that an explanation is due from you to myself. I will not say what I shall do in case this request is not complied with, but I am justified in saying, that I shall feel at liberty to place these letters before any person who is entitled to ask an explanation of myself.

Very respectfully,

JOHN A. CAMPBELL,
Associate Justice Supreme Court of U. S.

HON. WM. H. SEWARD, *Secretary of State.*

No reply has been made to this letter.

April 24, 1861.

MONTGOMERY, ALA., *May 7, 1861.*

SIR:—I submit to you two letters that were addressed by me to the Hon. Wm. H. Seward, Secretary of State of the United States, that contain an explanation of the nature and result of an intervention by me in the intercourse of the Commissioners of the Confederate States with that officer. I considered that I could perform no duty in which the entire American people, whether of the Federal Union or of the Confederate States, were more interested than that of promoting the counsels and the policy that

had for their object the preservation of peace. This motive dictated my intervention. Besides the interview referred to in these letters I informed the Assistant Secretary of State of the United States (not being able to see the Secretary) on the 11th of April, ult., of the existence of a dispatch of that date from General Beauregard to the Commissioners, in which he informed the Commissioners that he had demanded the evacuation of Sumter, and if refused, he would proceed to reduce it.

On the same day I had been told that President Lincoln had said that none of the vessels sent to Charleston were war vessels, and that force was not to be used in the attempt to supply the fort. I had no means of testing the accuracy of this information ; but offered that if the information was accurate I would send a dispatch to the authorities at Charleston, and it might prevent the disastrous consequences of a collision at that fort between the opposing forces. It was the last effort I would make to avert the calamities of war. The Assistant Secretary promised to give the matter attention, but I had no other interview with him or any other person on the subject, nor have I had any reply to the letters submitted to you.

Very respectfully,

JOHN A. CAMPBELL,

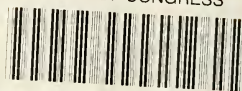
GEN. DAVIS, *President of the Confederate States.*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 700 443 4

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 700 443 4

